

JACOB SMITH: Good afternoon. My name is Jake Smith. I'm a professional engineer for Canyon Fuel Company at the Sufco Mine. I am a Utah native and an avid skier. So just for the record, I would like to say that I'm very grateful for all the miners that started the towns like Alta and Park City so that we could ski there. Unfortunately, I don't have enough time to address all the items identified in the programmatic Environmental Impact Statement at this moment, but I will be submitting a written statement. As a taxpayer, I have concerns regarding the federal lease moratorium and the programmatic EIS. Historically the nation has used coal as one of its natural resources to produce consistent and low-cost electricity which has facilitated the industrialization of the U.S. and continues to be a large contributor to our nation's economy. Even Secretary Sally Jewell admitted to the Desert Sun in California last month in May, "We are a nation that continues to be dependent on fossil fuels." Activists who call their movement "Keep it in the ground" ignore the fact that this country is dependent on oil, natural gas, and coal. I think that to keep it in the ground is naive. To say we can shift to 100 percent renewables is naive. Currently the coal industry pays an effective tax rates of approximately 40 percent. This money is used to support our government and improve the communities in which we live. We've seen several examples of that today. Meanwhile many of the renewable energy industries such as wind and solar receive large tax credits and subsidies. According to the U.S Energy Information Administration, renewable energy sources contributed to only 7 percent of the total electricity generated in the U.S. in 2015 meanwhile receiving 72 percent of electricity related subsidies provided by our government. Meanwhile coal alone produced 33 percent of the electricity generated in the U.S in 2015 and received only 6 percent of electricity related subsidies. I may not be an economist, but how does issuing 72 percent of the subsidies offered by the government, electricity related, to an industry that provided less than 10 percent of the total electricity generated fair return to our taxpayers? I question the logic and the motive of the BLM when after recognizing in the EIS statement that the current market conditions of the coal industry are great. New ruling is proposed to increase the tax royalties. This is an industry that provides our nation with low-cost electricity from a natural resource that we already receive 40 percent return on. Meanwhile we are asked as taxpayers to provide a significant tax credit and subsidy to an industry that does not have the ability to generate the same.

This moratorium programmatic EIS appears to be nothing more than another ploy from the current administration and special interest groups to push their political agenda and energy policies. I would like to remind the BLM that their mission is to sustain the health and diversity and productivity of public lands and request that you consider the positive impacts and additional revenue that could be generated from federal coal leases if the effective tax rate was lowered and allowed coal reserves to be mined that otherwise would not be economically feasible to recover. Also please consider the potential benefits that could result from providing subsidies to help advance clean coal technology. Thank you.